

## **4 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT MATTERS**

FILE REFERENCE INT1929196

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the list of enforcement matters currently before VCAT & the Magistrates' Court (and the County Court) be noted.

### **Attachments**

*Nil.*

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The following list of enforcement matters currently before VCAT & the Magistrates' Court is submitted for Councillors information.

### **BACKGROUND**

Where breaches of the Planning Scheme are detected, the breaches may give rise to criminal liability, which may result in infringements being issued, or charges being filed in the Magistrates Court of Victoria.

If Council cannot obtain appropriate remediation by consent, Council undertakes enforcement action at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

VCAT enforcement actions will usually be delayed until Magistrates' Court proceedings are completed.

These matters can take several forms and the following are the usual steps in the enforcement process.

### ***Current Enforcement cases***

The following list indicates such enforcement activities that are currently before VCAT or the Magistrates' Court.

<b>Property Address</b>	<b>Nature of Contravention</b>	<b>Status</b>
1 Walker Street, Koo Wee Rup (OH:SM:18409)	Land that was developed without a permit, in contravention of planning scheme - Heritage Overlay (43.01)	Magistrates' Court proceeding, the accused did not attend the contested hearing date (21/2/19). The accused has now been bailed to attend the Dandenong Magistrates Court on <b>19 July 2019</b> .
765 Gembrook Rd, Pakenham	Native vegetation removal, and earthworks	Magistrates' Court proceeding, alleging that the owner has conducted earthworks that require a permit, and

Upper (OH:LK:16299)	creating driveway and hardstand, in breach of Rural Conservation Zone – Schedule 2, Environmental Significance Overlay Schedule 1, and Clause 52.17	cleared native vegetation, both without a permit.  The case is listed for next mention on <b>8 May 2019</b> , having been previously adjourned to allow for the High Court application to be determined (see below)
715 Gembrook Rd, Pakenham Upper (OH:AB:14130)	Construction of retaining wall without building permit.	FOR INFORMATION ONLY – ongoing <i>planning enforcement</i> matters relating to property  CASE relating to unpermitted building work (retaining wall) –  On <b>21 December 2017</b> , the Magistrates Court found the charges proven. The owner appealed the decision to the County Court.  In <b>April 2018</b> , the owner filed an application in the High Court of Australia in respect of the County Court case. On <b>12 September 2018</b> , the High Court dismissed this application as being without proper basis.  On <b>11 April 2019</b> , the County Court found the charges proven, dismissing the appeal. The owner was fined \$1,500 without conviction, and ordered to pay in excess of \$17,000 costs.
555 Back Creek Rd, Gembrook OH:JALF:18416 (cf EH:LK:16272)	Land developed contrary to Rural Conservation Zone, Environmental Significance Overlay and Native Vegetation particular provisions, by the creation of a dam, destruction of native vegetation and the construction of a building, without a permit	VCAT enforcement order application, listed for contested hearing on <b>18 April 2019</b> .
Officer South Rd, Officer OH:JALF:18419	Land used for materials recycling, being a prohibited use, contrary to the Urban Growth Zone.	VCAT enforcement order application, listed for contested hearing on <b>11 June 2019</b> .

### ***Conclusion***

The list of current enforcement activities is presented for information.

## Glossary of terms

### **Practice day hearing**

This is the first stage of the VCAT process, and is held shortly after the application is lodged. It is used to assess the future path of the case, and determine if the case can be settled, or will need to proceed to a full hearing.

### **Mention hearing**

A mention hearing is a brief hearing, where the Court or VCAT lists the matter for brief hearing. If the case can be dealt with swiftly, it will be dealt with at a Mention hearing. For more lengthy matters (such as contested hearings) the case will be further adjourned. In the Magistrates' Court, the Court may hear a "guilty plea" during a mention hearing.

### **Administrative Mention**

Administrative Mention is a hearing held without the parties in attendance and requires written correspondence from both parties to update the Member on the process of the matter.

### **Adjournment**

A court or Tribunal will adjourn a case when the matter is deferred until another date. This can occur for a number of reasons, and is at the discretion of the Magistrate or VCAT member.

### **Land Management Plan**

These plans are used to describe actions that will remediate the land, and commonly describe rehabilitation following unlawful vegetation removal. This plan will then become mandatory, by being incorporated into an Enforcement Order or a Section 173 agreement. The contents of the Plan will be decided by Council's Environment Team, or Vegetation Management officer.

### **Contested hearing / Full hearing**

A contested (or "full" hearing) means the matter is disputed by the accused/respondent, and Council and the respondent will fully present and test each other's evidence and/or submissions. A contested (of "full") hearing is effectively a "trial".

### **Consent Orders**

Consent Orders are an agreement between Council and the Respondents to, in most cases, create an Enforcement Order with conditions that are agreed to by both Parties. This is done where a Respondent has accepted there has been a breach of the Act and wants to comply with Council's proposed Enforcement Order. This saves on time and money by avoiding a hearing or lengthy VCAT processes.